

## **ARLINGTON PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

*June 22nd, 2021*

The Town of Arlington Park and Recreation Commission came to order for its online virtual meeting via Zoom on Tuesday June 22nd, 2021 at 7:00pm.

**Commission Members:** Leslie Mayer, Jen Rothenberg, Phil Lasker, and Scott Walker were present. Recreation Director Joe Connelly and Program Supervisor Zachary Vaillette were also present. Shirley Canniff, Sarah Carrier, & Scott Lever were not in attendance.

**Anticipated Speakers:** Nishaad Vinayak

**Members of the Public:** Whitney Roberts, Betsy Leondar-Wright, Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Alan Jones, Josh Fenollosa

**Preliminary Matter:** Leslie Mayer, Park & Recreation Commission Chair, took formal attendance via a roll call. Ms. Mayer read a statement pertaining to Governor Baker's Public Meeting Law change due to COVID-19 regarding virtual meetings. Meeting business ground rules and procedures were also covered by Ms. Mayer.

### **Open Forum – Public Comment**

N/A

### **Correspondence Received: Bishop School Playground (Simon Roberts)**

Correspondence was received from resident Whitney Roberts in regards to the Bishop School Playground. Ms. Roberts was present on the call to speak on this. Her family moved to Arlington (5) years ago and live close to Bishop School. Her 3 and a half year old son and his friends from the neighborhood are frequent users of this playground. This has been the case since he was old enough to walk. Ms. Roberts is concerned that the bridge structure on this playground is broken. Her husband previously reached out to Recreation about this issued and was told that the manufacturing company that produced the structure is out of business. With this, no replacement parts or solutions are available. This has caused the Town to board up this section of the structure. The Roberts family also reviewed the Recreation Capital plan, which lists Bishop not being updated for over 7 years. The family understands why the feature is closed and boarded up, but believes these needs to be addressed and fixed/replaced in the near future. Mr. Connelly shared information on the playground study completed in 2019 on all playgrounds in Arlington. Ms. Roberts acknowledge that the department has been responsive. She previously reached out about the removed accessible saucer swing at the Bishop Playground. This feature was fixed, but was removed for almost a year. Mr. Connelly noted that the manufacturer for this piece is based in Europe, which led to delays during the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Connelly shared more information on this bridge feature that is broken. Certified Playground Inspector, Jody Reale, of Reale Associates was brought in to assess conditions. A temporary fix was made and this did not hold. After attempting this and with the parts no longer being manufactured, they determined there was no feasible long term solution to fix this feature so that it was safe for users. Ms. Roberts responded and stated that she would hate to see it take seven years for this playground to be fixed, with the little kids who are users left behind. Ms. Mayer explained the avenues in which the Department gets funding for projects including details about CPA, Capital, and CDBG Funding. Ms. Mayer also shared that two renovations would be occurring to playgrounds in FY22 that accommodate the same age group (Spy Pond & Parmenter Playgrounds). Ms. Roberts asked if funding is different for the school system and if it was possible for the cost of a playground renovation to be split. Ms. Mayer explained that the funding process is different. The school system does receive funding from similar avenues, but there are constant discussions regarding who is responsible for funding what projects. Ms. Roberts asked the Commission if there was anything she or her neighbors could do to help.

Mr. Connelly stated to continue to advocate. He will be sending her a more in depth breakdown on the planned playground projects and is willing to set up a call to discuss the process more. Ms. Mayer stated that they should note that the funding previously discussed is not just for playground upgrades, but rather for all park and recreation facility upgrades in Town. Ms. Roberts asked why Spy Pond is the location that was chosen for FY22 when the current playground is usable and nothing is broken. Mr. Connelly stated that their capital planning schedule is all based off age and status.

Mr. Connelly noted with the Parmenter project receiving CBDG funding for FY22, the Bishop project will now move up a year. Ms. Mayer stated that the Commission understands the importance of playgrounds as links in the community and the effort to keep them in the best condition possible. Ms. Roberts thanked the Commission for their feedback and time. She again stated that she is thankful the saucer swing, she just hopes it does not take (7) years for the Bishop playground to be replaced. She will be looking forward to hearing from Mr. Connelly and plans to help the cause in whatever way possible.

### **Special Event Requests**

*Spy Pond Fun Day - 9/25 –Betsy Leondar-Wright*

Annual request from friends lead by Betsy. 20<sup>th</sup> Annual. Low Key Low Tech for kids and adults. No food. All on tables and below stone walls. Arlington Land Trust is trying to arrange for the crew coaching boat taking tours of Elisabeth Island. Ms. Mayer asked about live music. Betsy said yes two previous bands interest. Brass band no microphone. Will put two tents in corner of field by bleachers. Put up two tents. Overseen by open mic night. Would love to do it again always a big hit and missed having it last year.

Ms. Rothenberg thanked. Have to ask about liability in terms of boat rides out to island. Land trust have waivers. Mr. Connelly said waivers town counsel drafted for Kayak. No further.

Ms. Rothenberg made motion . Sep 25<sup>th</sup> from 10 -1, rain date Sunday 26<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Lasker Seconded. Approved 4-0 at 7:27pm.

### **Eagle Scout Project – Menotomy Rocks Park – Nishaad Vinayak**

Local Boy Scout, Nishaad Vinayak, was present on the call to discuss his previously proposed Eagle Scout Project at Menotomy Rocks Park. Mr. Vinayak proposed this project several months ago to the Commission. The goal of the project is to create and build a walking bridge on a trail in Menotomy Rocks Park. This location is near an entrance and can become very muddy during the wet season. This proposed project will help create a safer and more desirable walking path through that area for users. His original proposal was well received. Commissioners asked him to follow up on several questions and action items during the time he was finishing his school year. He was able to follow up on several of these matters and now has a much better understanding of what he would like the project to look like/what is needed. Mr. Vinayak noted that he was unable to discuss this project with Adam Glick (New England Mountain Bike Association) as requested, following several failed attempts to contact him. As requested, he was able to visit the property during heavy periods of rain to determine the standing water area and depth. The noted height needed was 1 inch. Another item to note was that Mr. Vinayak attended a Friends of Menotomy Rocks Park Meeting. The Friends Group is in full support of this proposed project. The group loved the idea and is even potentially willing to support with maintenance moving forward. This would be in addition to any planned maintenance through his Boy Scout Troop. Mr. Vinayak outlined his new plan of an (8) foot wide walking path, made from 4 X 4s. These pieces of wood will be completely wrapped in a special tape, which will help the wood last longer in the mud. Mr. Vinayak stated the product he plans to use doubles the longevity of the wood, bringing the lifespan to 20-40 years. He noted that local resident, Brad O'Donnell, helped him with this project design. The total estimated cost for the project, before discounts or any donations, is \$1,200.00. Mr. Vinayak will be working with the Boy Scouts regarding funding. Ms. Mayer asked his proposed starting date for the project. He will need to confirm this with the Boy Scouts, but if all goes well he plans to begin the project the 1<sup>st</sup> week of August. Ms. Mayer also asked if the taping will make the product less slippery. Mr. Vinayak plans to look into installing an additional non-slip grip tape on the boards. Mr. Lasker asked if the 4x4 timbers would be raised or directly on the ground, how the ground would be leveled. Mr. Vinayak stated no, and that he believes weight will hold on them on their own if placed directly on the ground Mr. Lasker stated that he should look into staking these boards as contractors typically drill holes and drive rebar into them to keep them in place. Mr. Lasker loves the project and believes that Nishaad has done a great job. Mr. Walker agreed with Mr. Lasker on his work with the plan. He also believes that the grip tape to limit slip risks. Ms. Rothenberg thanked Nishaad for his due diligence. She also suggested that he ask the Friends of Menotomy Rocks Park for a potential donation/funding. Mr. Vaillette suggested for him to schedule out volunteers in terms of project work.

Mr. Lasker made the motion to approve Nishaad Vinayak's proposed Eagle Scout project to build a walking bridge, as discussed, at Menotomy Rocks Park in 2021. This motion was seconded by Ms. Rothenberg. Nishaad Vinayak's proposed plan for his Eagle Scout Project at Menotomy Rocks Park was approved by Commissioners, 4 – 0, at 7:41pm. Mr. Vinayak thanked Commissioners for their approval, feedback, and support.

### **Town Wide Playground Working Group**

#### *Accessibility Project Update*

Mr. Connelly reported that they are putting together a survey/list of questions that can be completed at playgrounds in Town to assess general accessibility. More information on this will be provided to the Commission when available.

### **Capital Project Updates**

#### *Reservoir Phase II Building Project*

Mr. Connelly reported that he has been informed that the building work should be 100% complete this week. They are currently working on electrical work in the building. A lot needs to occur for their Monday beach opening, but Mr. Connelly is confident they will be ready. Ms. Mayer asked if the occupancy permit for the building has been issued. Mr. Connelly responded, stating that he is trying to schedule the inspection for this Friday. In the event the building has not been issued the required occupancy permit, Mr. Connelly stated he plans to rent several porta potties.

#### *Reservoir Phase II Site Work Project*

Mr. Connelly reported that SumCo has been a pleasure to work with. The contractor is currently prepping the path for work to begin. Mr. Connelly noted that work on the new boat ramp will occur during the beach season. He has been recently meeting with members of the Lexington Conservation Commission about opening up a connection to Lex Farm. Ms. Mayer noted that she met with Danielle Desilets of KZLA and Conservation onsite about this matter. Mr. Connelly stated that they are just waiting for approval from the Lexington Town Manager on this. He reported that communication and coordination efforts have gone smoothly. It was also noted that SumCo knows the importance of providing resident access to the Reservoir walking path when possible. However, there will be a time where access will not be available. It was noted that the Commission must discuss how the new path will be opened (all at once or in sections). Ms. Mayer noted this will most likely be in sections. Mr. Walker asked if the construction fence will affect parking access during beach season. Mr. Connelly responded by stating that the fencing impact will be minimal, only eliminate 1-2 spots. Ms. Rothenberg requested that an updated project timeline be posted at Reservoir Beach and around the Reservoir walking path. She believes these updates will reflect well on regular users. Mr. Connelly will also have the updated project timeline added to the Town website.

#### *ADA Path Summer Street Complex*

No Update to Report.

#### *Mountain Biking Feasibility Study Update*

Mr. Connelly stated that (2) proposals were received for the Mountain Bike Feasibility Study. Proposal received were from Stantec and Powderhorn. Mr. Connelly has not reviewed each proposal in full and will be doing so in the next several days. A small working group will then be put together to come up with a recommendation on which contractor to award/move forward with. This will include Mr. Lasker, Mr. Walker, Josh Fenollosa, and Henry Fenollosa. Both Josh & Henry Fenollosa were present on the call and are looking forward to the process. Mr. Connelly thanked Josh Fenollosa for touring the Hill's Hill site with the potential vendors. Ms. Rothenberg asked if Adam Glick should assist with the review process. Mr. Connelly stated that they plan to have Adam Glick involved and provide feedback further into the process. Ms. Mayer stated the proposals for Mountain Biking will be reviewed and that this will be a future agenda item.

#### *FY 22 Projects – Hurd, Spy Playground, Parmenter School*

Ms. Mayer happily reported that Recreation has been approved and awarded all the CPA funding requested for the (3) FY22 Capital Projects. Funding for these projects and the design phase will be available July 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Connelly

proposed the discussion regarding how they should move forward with the RFP process for these projects. After discussion, the Commission determined that the design RFP for the two playground projects (Spy Pond & Parmenter) will be combined. With this, the design RFP for Hurd Field will be separate. With the recent Field and Playground Feasibility Study completed by the Town by Stantec, their firm may have first right of refusal for the Hurd project.

#### **Recreation Updates – Open Space and Recreation Plan**

Mr. Vaillette provided information on the Public Meeting held on 6/17/21 for the Open Space and Recreation Plan Update. This meeting went very well. With over 75 participants, a great deal of feedback was received which will be helpful during the update process. Highlights and common themes in the Recreation breakout rooms included improved maintenance, improved signage, more events/access to arts & culture within parks, and the desire to have an outdoor swimming pool in Town. Ms. Rothenberg noted that the relationship between the Parks & Recreation and Art Commissions need to be strengthened moving forward. Mr. Connelly and Mr. Vaillette shared details on summer camp and the plan for Reservoir Beach, with both opening next week.

#### **Approval of Minutes – 5/11/2021, 5/25/2021, 6/8/2021**

The approval of (3) set of Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes was discussed. This was for the 5/11, 5/25, & 6/8 meetings. It was determined that the approval of the meeting minutes for 5/25 & 6/8 will be tabled until the next Commission Meeting to allow for more review and edit time. At this time, Commissioners shared their edits for the 5/11 meeting minutes. Previously identified edits were sent to Mr. Vaillette by Mr. Walker and Ms. Mayer.

The motion to approve the Meeting Minutes from the 5/11/21 Park and Recreation Commission Meetings, as amended, was made by Ms. Rothenberg. This motion was seconded by Mr. Walker. The Commission voted to approve the 5/11/21 Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes, as amended, with a vote of 4-0.

#### **Comments and Items for Future Meetings:**

- a) AYBSA Batting Cage Request
- b) Carry In, Carry Out Trash Policy Discussion
- c) Hills Hill Unauthorized Trail Building Discussion

#### **Other**

- Appointment of Commission Member to Youth and Young Adult Study Committee
- Bikes in Parks
- Robbins Farm Usage (During Day and 4<sup>th</sup> of July Event)
- Park and Rec Commission Chair Transition. Phil Lasker new Commission Chair. Leslie Mayer's term ended as chair. Ms. Mayer will continue to serve as a voting Commission Member.

Mr. Walker made the motion to adjourn the meeting. This motion was seconded by Ms. Rothenberg. Motion to adjourn the meeting was approved by Commissioners, 4-0, at 8:38pm. The Arlington Park & Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes were respectfully submitted by Program Supervisor, Zachary Vaillette.